

## Tilburg University

### **An Introduction to human rights in the Middle East & North Africa - a guide for NGOs**

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An Introduction to  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
in the Middle East & North Africa  
– a Guide for NGOs



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# 1. Why this Manual?

Some NGOs in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) may be interested in the field of Human Rights (HR), but feel that they do not know enough about it. Or perhaps they do not know where to start. This manual is designed to help them. It is intended to be an Ideas Box, introducing important problems and approaches around which are valuable roles for NGOs.

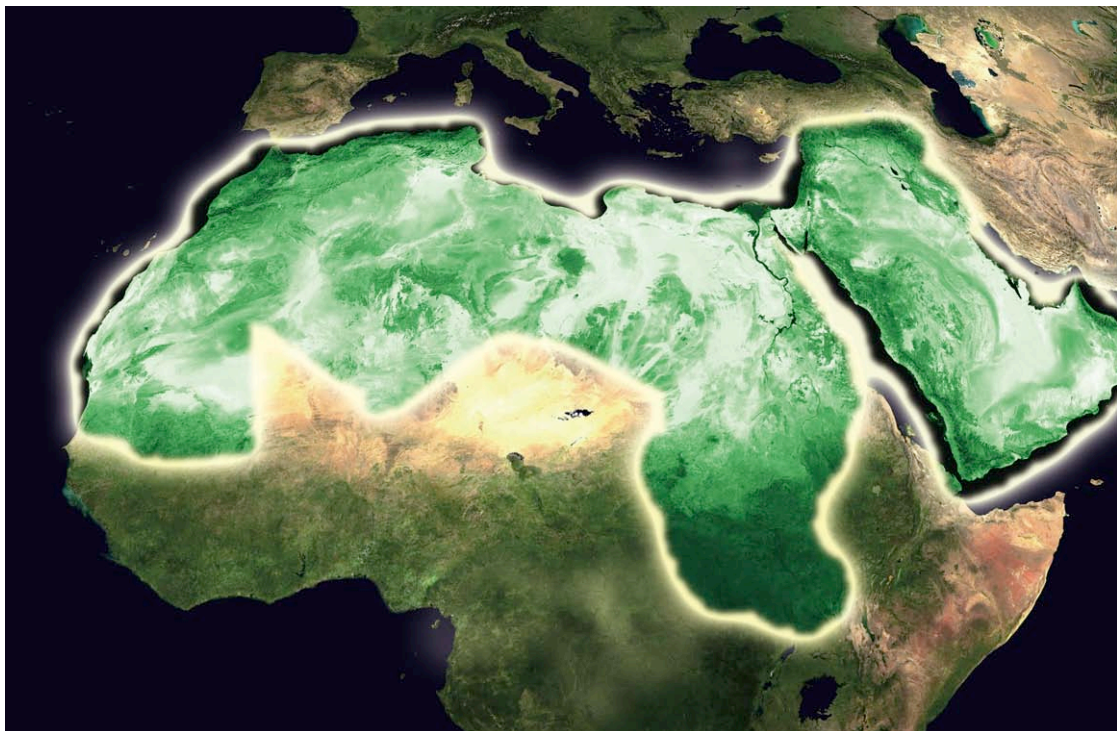
## ***Human Rights***

This is an area where different NGOs are active at different levels. The UN organizations and Amnesty International work at International level, creating a legal framework for Human Rights. National NGOs can help in this endeavour.

Then, when a government signs up to an agreement or to protocols it becomes open to pressure to live up to its commitment. And if it becomes deaf to pressure, then perhaps its trading partners can be pressurised and pass it on.

NGOs can help supply the pressure. Or, working in a different way, an NGO can be the spokesperson for a group, even for an individual; it can organise demonstrations or letter campaigns, write to an individual political prisoner, or help to change public opinion. Some organizations are on the front line, with their workers acting as Human Rights Defenders. They keep near the fighting, acting as witnesses. Or a quieter NGO may chronicle, find and interview witnesses and make the facts known.

The manual can only be a short Introduction to a big and complicated field. It offers only a basic understanding of the topics it covers. Any NGO that plans future work in a particular field is strongly encouraged to use **Section 8** (Further Information – references, websites, on-line courses etc.) so that they find more information and get a more solid understanding of the issues. In addition, the NGO can invite an expert to come and train its staff.



*Middle East and North Africa (MENA)*



## 2. Understanding the Problem

This is always the first step when an organisation becomes involved. NGOs can spend some time charting the problems in its community, its region or country. Covered below are the following topics:

- 2.1 Human Rights in the setting of the Middle East & North Africa
- 2.2 Understanding the situation in your own country
- 2.3 Understanding the law and Human Rights
- 2.4 Human Rights and Gender
- 2.5 Domestic Violence
- 2.6 Analysing the Problem – Tactical Mapping of a Human Rights Issue
- 2.7 A Problem for Analysis by Tactical Mapping: Underage Marriages

### 2.1 Human Rights in the setting of the Middle East & North Africa

The international human rights system has been slow to develop in the Middle East and North Africa region. Sixty years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed by 48 states, including Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria. However, Saudi Arabia was among the eight who did not sign. And overall the affect of the Declaration has been far less in the Middle East than might have been expected, compared to the other regions of the world. The areas of concern for every citizen are:

- **The lack of effective legal frameworks** and enforcement systems for people's human rights. In fact, Saudi Arabia and some of the Gulf States have not yet signed two key International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- **That state power is in the hands of small elites:** for example the clerics in Iran; civilians with close links to the military in Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia; religious minorities in the Gulf States. These elites are largely unaccountable to those they govern and with the exception of Iran, can count on Western support in keeping the opposition quiet. The democratic process, with elections and representation through parliament, that could provide checks and balances to power – these elements are weak or non-existent.
- **A lack of justice and dignity** in the daily lives of people: the security and intelligence services have large powers and are controlled only by the government; they say that "state security" and "public safety" are more important than human rights and quality of life. Citizens can face arbitrary arrest, detention without trial, even torture.
- **No Independent judiciary:** the courts and lawyers lack independence and are controlled by the executive part of government. This abuse is being fought notably in Egypt, where judges and lawyers are demanding greater judicial independence.
- **Discrimination against Women:** Iran is one of very few states that have failed to sign up for to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). More positively, in Kuwait and elsewhere, women have achieved some emancipation.

- **The lack real commitment, by governments in the Middle East and by countries with international clout, to push Israel into a peaceful stance.** The current state of conflict, combined with the “War against Terror”, allows the USA and Israel to build Israel’s armaments and the latter to invade the Gaza strip. It gives Syria a “reason” to arm and imprison. A degree of hope can be found in the work of NGOs especially in Palestine, educating the next generation to find better solutions and more humanity.
- **The increasing marginalization of society’s weakest members.** War, external or civil, oppressive regimes, growing unemployment – these may be pushing extended families to the limits of their ability to care. And as a consequence, Granny, or the son with Down’s, or the widow of the cousin shot dead and her three small children – are left without care from the family and remain invisible to the state – so who is left to offer help if not the NGO sector?

### ***The Economy In the Middle East***

Parts of the Middle East have access to natural resources and are building extreme wealth. Countries like Dubai have concentrated on building modern commercial centres for international use and a few families are amassing big fortunes. But these developments are dependent on outside experts such as architects and a huge pool of relatively unskilled labour, also imported and temporary, who have low pay, and little protection of their Human Rights. The host countries are not building their own expertise. In North Africa, Libya has oil. Other countries are building tourism as a growing resource. But other notable features of the economy are these:

There is major disparity between the well-being of the poorest countries and the richest. There are also poor, rural areas in rich countries. There is little evidence of regional sharing of the wealth – little evidence of any cross-border investment into the future adults of the region, through good health care and education. The whole area has very high unemployment rates, with rates for young people of nearly a third.

A dimension of Human Rights is that the children of a country should be born healthy, survive their first years in reasonable health, should get to school and complete their education. The statistics in this area are complicated by missing data. There is also a lack of logical connection between the presence in a country of wealth from oil and the wellbeing of young children. This depends on good health facilities and healthy, educated mothers. The ranking of the World’s countries according to Under-5 mortality, for example, shows how poorly the Yemen is able to care for her young and how Saudi is doing not much better than the Occupied Palestinian Territories with all their problems.

Country	Under-5 mortality rate per thousand	Ranking
Yemen	73	48
Iraq	44	66
Algeria	37	75
Occ.Pales.Terr	27	95
Saudi	25	97
Oman / Kuwait / Bahrain	11-12	137-140
Israel	5	166

Figures showing the numbers of young people completing secondary school indicate that, except in Bahrain, Oman and Iran, girls leave earlier than boys, especially in Iraq. Yemen shows by other indicators a high percentage of infants born underweight (32%) and under-5s who are underweight (42%). Of course, other countries may be under-reporting.

## 2.2 Understanding the situation in your own country

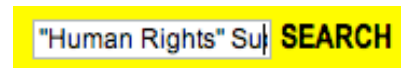
Your NGO needs to gather as much good information as you can. This may be the time to go on-line. This is for two reasons:

### **Getting good information about your country**

Start with Amnesty International ([www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)). On the home page you can select from a list of countries to find the address of the office responsible for where you live.



And in the search box you can type in “Human Rights” plus the name of your country to get relevant publications. Then type in “Human Rights” plus “Middle East” to get the wider picture.



Ensure that between you and your colleagues, someone reads every key document.

### **Finding your Network**

Go to a search engine like Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) and type in “Human Rights” plus the name of your country plus “NGOs”. There will be several pages of highly relevant links. You will probably find a directory of NGOs and the direct addresses of NGOs working in similar fields to yourselves.



As you work you will be listing names and email addresses and signing up for newsletters. You can start emailing them, getting up-to-date information, finding projects that use good tactics, and possible allies in future work. You would also identify the more reliable local newspapers and finding out how to access them on-line. When useful articles are published, note the name of the author(s). You may want to work with the press.

Major changes are happening with the Web and with new generations of electronics. Here are some examples of advances in Human Rights because of the new technology:

- With Internet cafes where people can write anonymously, persecuted minorities can provide better information on their numbers, ideology and practices; people will fill in an on-line questionnaire when in their daily lives, they have to hide their opinions and practices.
- In Tehran, young people are turning to mobile phones to build safe and private relationships. Since such relationships are forbidden, the phone calls are acts of personal subversion.
- Mobile phones with camera functions are bearing witness to events, even though those involved deny what they have done. We know what happened during Saddam Hussein’s execution whatever the official report. We followed the Iran Presidential election even when foreign reporters were confined to their hotels.

- The right website can get good information to specific groups.

**EXAMPLE:** LINKdotNET manages “Kalam Fil Moufid”, a webpage on the Masrawy.com portal that encourages youth to express themselves, think critically and freely discuss issues of importance to them. The webpage also provides them with information that is of interest to their age group in a very simple and interesting manner.

These electronic approaches will be discussed further below.

## 2.3 Understanding the law and Human Rights

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### ***Human Rights – how they came to be***

After the Second World War and the horrific examples it gave of the inhumanity of people, the United Nations began to develop the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was signed in 1948 and since then, many further Charters, Declarations and International laws have come into being. Can they, do they make a difference? It is said that these declarations are Western Concepts or that they are all words and no action. But here it is argued that at least in some ways they make a difference: they have brought about major changes in attitudes and they have helped in improving patterns of resource allocation.

### ***Changing Attitudes***

As any state exercises its sovereignty in becoming a party to human rights treaties, its officials have to think about the meaning of the words they sign up to. Fundamental to human rights is the principle that all human beings are equal in dignity and rights and that they are entitled to their human rights without distinction of any kind. Equal? Women and Men? People of other religions? That miserable ethnic minority up North near the border? This is not easy for Governments, NGOs or indeed any of us. The work of Human Rights NGOs includes reminding Governments of what they have promised – and, through their work, reminding ‘beneficiaries’ that their state has undertaken to respect minimum standards for them.

Human rights law is based on the principle that the state is the primary entity obligated to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of those in its territory and at all levels of government. For example, a state’s poverty eradication plan should be automatically reviewed before and during implementation to assess its human rights impact. The state also undertakes to regulate behaviour of third parties – corporations, international organisations, etc. to ensure that human rights are effectively enjoyed.

But the means by which those agreed international standards are to be met – these are a matter of discretion for each state. For example, the standards to be met to ensure a fair trial are clear and detailed (the right to a defence, the presumption of innocence etc) – yet there is a variety of legal systems that meet those minimum standards. Compare for example Civil law and Common law justice systems.

### ***Finding the right principles and approaches***

A commonly expressed confusion flows from the mistaken assumption that there is ONE human rights-based approach. The reality is that there are principles to be applied to achieve human rights standards; the choice of methods, tools, etc are left to states, to NGOs, bi-laterals etc to choose according to what is most effective. A government, donor, or NGO may expect to use different approaches for different areas of work in different contexts. There is more than one human rights-based approach. The concept of human



rights based approaches (HRBA) is contained in **five legal principles**, namely that the approach should:

- 1) apply the international human rights framework
- 2) empower the rights holders
- 3) ensure participation in one's own development - as of right and not just as best practice
- 4) be non-discriminatory and give priority to vulnerable groups; as well as making duty-bearers accountable to rights-holders for both the process and the impact of the approach
- 5) ensure a core minimum of the right

### ***The Indivisibility of Human Rights***

Development encompasses the full spectrum of human rights and these are indivisible, inter-related and inter-dependent - for example, the right to education cannot be enjoyed without enjoyment of the right to food.

### ***Empowerment***

If Development is based on human rights, it shifts the focus from the fact that poor people have needs, to the fact that poor people have human rights. It requires that root causes be addressed and it involves the equitable distribution of power and resources. It serves to empower communities and individuals to know, claim and defend their rights and to know their correlative responsibilities.

### ***Participation***

Human rights-based solutions maximise the participation of a community (participation itself being a human right) enhancing the impact of development work, as well as its sustainability.

### ***Working at different levels***

Whether it is the strategic planning, marketing, policy, priorities, programmes and partnerships (with CBOs, donors, NGOs) or the organisation's own staff conditions of work, selection, training, management and promotion – at each level work needs to be premised on Human Rights.

## **2.4 Human Rights and Gender**

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Looking at the Middle East and North Africa in the context of Gender, it is clear that in comparison with other areas of the world it is a conservative area, slow to change.

Factors playing a role include:

- **Religion**, which permeates so many aspects of public and private life. Islam is the only major religion that has an expression in a legal code, Shari'a. And this code is not always friendly to either sex.
- **Conflict**: the other major re-enforcer of conservatism. There have been ten years of civil unrest in Algeria and decades of fighting over Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Prolonged conflict can have a traumatic effect on both men and women. In times of war women tend to lose any gains towards modernity, whether in dress, education or political participation. Females who had had to take over the

role of head of family and decision-maker lose that role. The excuse and the actuality of physical danger are used to push women back into the home. In addition, in the last twenty years many Moslems have reacted to world events by re-examining their own beliefs – to their great credit. In consequence, some women have adopted a stricter code of behaviour. So in Syria and Lebanon, for example, the number of women wearing veils has increased – whether from personal choice or as a response to family and societal pressures.

- **Attitudes towards Human Rights.** Since Human Rights see every human as having equal values, then any NGO which starts with equality of opportunity for women and men becomes an example for all its contacts.
- **Change.** And there are forces pushing for change – in almost every country there is a growing number of NGOs employing educated, active women nationals and working for the rights of both women and men. These organisations can lobby and put on pressure. In the less patriarchal countries an effect is already visible. For example in Algeria, which has a Family Code based on Shari'a, pressure led in 2003 to an amendment in favour of women's rights.

Now ask yourselves...

***Can the girls and women in your country control what happen to their bodies?***

In many countries of the Middle East and North Africa most marriages are arranged and neither party has any say in the choice of partner. Usually though the boy is older than the girl – and is expected to make any decision for the pair.

Child marriage is common in some countries but by no means all. Looking at the percentage of girls aged 15-19 married, divorced or widowed, Yemen has the highest rate at 27%; Syria 25%; Palestine 24%; Saudi Arabia 16%; Egypt 15%; Morocco 13%, Algeria only 4%; Libya is one of the lowest at 1%. North Africa seems to be modifying some traditional practices faster than the Middle East countries.

How prevalent in your country is Domestic Violence? Or female genital mutilation, now confined mainly to Egypt and Yemen? Can either of the parties in a marriage seek healthcare or contraception?

***Can girls delay marriage until after education (so that they are the best mothers they can be)?***

Again, Yemen performs the worst, with one of the world's biggest gaps between the rates of girls and boys attending school as well as the percentage of girls under-19 already married. Young brides pay a heavy price in childbirth and so do their children, who are twice as likely to die in infancy than the babies of older mothers. Children of young mothers are more likely to grow up in poverty and stay out of the reach of health services and schools.

***Can they go out to work, get training and a bank loan?***

In countries like the Yemen, women have always needed to go out doing the agriculture, especially during times when men have emigrated to find paid work. In a number of countries, wives still officially have to get permission from their husbands to work. But now more urban and educated women are out working in offices and shops.

If women want to start their own business it may be difficult, for example in Saudi where a woman outside the house should always be escorted by her male guardian and cannot mix with other males in the public arena. The country does however have one all-female

Investment Centre and this should help a few. (Saudi Arabia seems to have accumulated more extreme customs not from the Koran but elsewhere. And other countries started seeing it as the purest expression of good practice and began to imitate).

There is a lot of talent in the region locked up in stay-at-home women. The current recession may not be a time to waste skills and production potential because of traditional perceptions of women's and men's roles and leadership abilities.

One group of working women in the Middle East is the big immigrant community of domestic workers. Islam strongly condemns their abuse but legally they have few rights or protections and are very vulnerable to mistreatment by employers. So are their male counterparts working in construction and living in camps. But most domestic workers live with their employers so are isolated both at work and after working hours.

### ***Can girls inherit from their parents?***

In most of the countries of the region the law gives a lesser share to daughters than it does to sons. In Algeria though people are finding strategies to get round this before they die. They are making fictitious donations to trusts or sales to daughters. In Lebanon the inheritance laws are different for Moslems and Non-Moslems.

### ***Can the current generation make gender roles less rigid?***

In the end, loosening rigid roles for women helps men too – as the poem says: “For every woman who is tired of acting weak when she knows she is strong, there is a man who is tired of appearing strong when he feels vulnerable.”

## **2.5 Domestic Violence**

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**A definition of Domestic Violence** is “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, in public or in private”. It is important to emphasise that, apart from being a violation of Human Rights, domestic violence degrades two big elements of a country's riches:

- the bodies of women who are caring for the nation's families, and
- the minds of women who could be participating in the work force and building the economy.

Domestic violence exacts a cost for everybody in the country.

While reliable statistics are hard to come by, studies estimate that, from country to country, between 20 and 50 per cent of women have experienced physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner or family member.

Violence against women can take place throughout their life cycle. In the period before birth, sex-selective abortion is usually confined to girl fetuses; then, pregnancy seems to trigger the act of battering in some men, affecting the health of both mother and baby. Then, little girls face underage marriage and female genital mutilation ...and the list continues through life up to the elderly women forced to commit suicide.

**EXAMPLE:** 23% of Yemeni women have undergone Female Genital Mutilation, the partial or total removal of external female genitalia

Among the factors that perpetuate domestic violence are:

- **Cultural factors** such as the belief in the inherent superiority of males, values that say that men “own” women and girls or that violence is an acceptable means of resolving conflict;
- **Economic factors** that make women economically dependent on men and denies most alternatives such as employment, credit and training;
- **Legal factors** like the laws regarding divorce, child custody, maintenance and inheritance, legal definitions of rape and domestic abuse; and
- **Political issues** which include the under-representation of women in power, politics, the media and in the legal and medical professions – and the risk of challenging the status quo and religious laws.

**Strategies** should be designed to operate across a broad range of areas. Key areas for intervention include – but are not mutually exclusive: advocacy and awareness raising/ education for building a culture of non-violence / training / direct service provision & intervention to victims-survivors and perpetrators / legal reform / monitoring interventions and measures / data collection and analysis / early identification of those ‘at risk’.

**EXAMPLE of a strategy:** Help girls enrol in school and help them stay there until they graduate. In the Middle East and North Africa, girls’ enrolment in primary schools is well below that of boys and they drop out. What could your NGO do to make changes for the better?

## 2.6 Analysing the Problem – Tactical Mapping of a Human Rights Issue

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Tactical Mapping is a type of exercise that can be useful whenever problems involve different levels or power groups in your community – whether personal, local or national. Once you have defined a problem, it is a way of organising your analysis and finding solutions, using big sheets of white paper and felt pens or chalks:

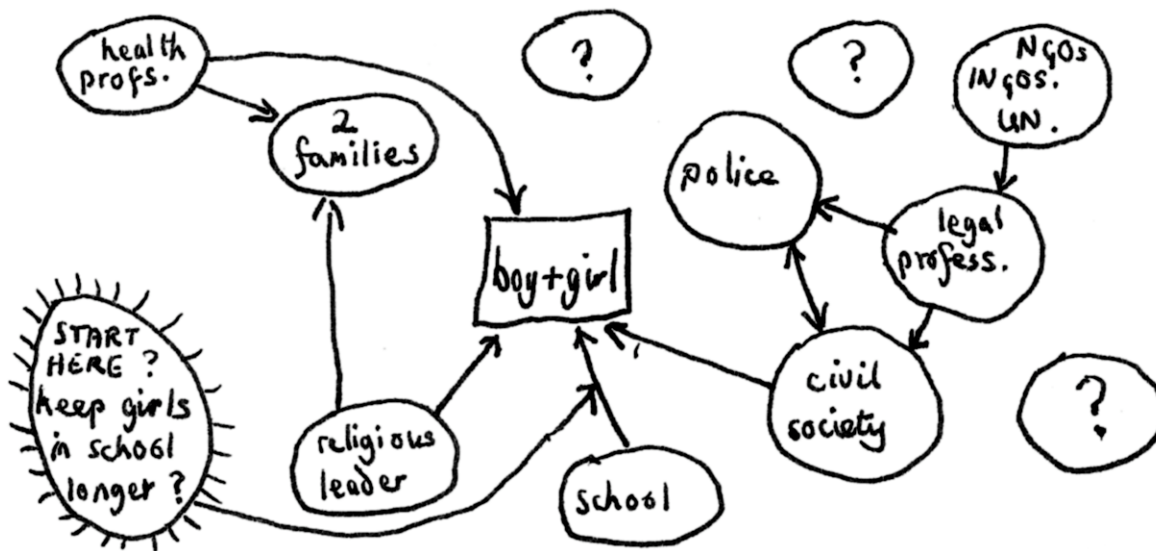
- Organise your time and space; get the equipment – the big sheets of paper and felt pens or chalks
- Ensure the presence of all the NGO workers who will be involved, plus a couple of people with personal experience and a couple of concerned and key local people. If you have more than nine people, break the group down into smaller groups. Differences in findings between the groups are a good starting-point for discussion. Make sure that people with higher status do not dominate the discussion – perhaps you could put them together and have a lower status group working out of earshot.
- In the middle of each sheet of paper mark the individuals representing the heart of the abuse.
- In each group, members propose, discuss and mark in the groups and institutions that create the social context of that situation. They add arrows to show how the influences flow. Groups, institutions and types of influence can all suggest points where a tactic can intervene.



Ask yourselves the following questions:

- 1) What key relationships need to be affected to move your issue and strategy forward?
- 2) What tactics are currently at play or available?
- 3) How do these tactics affect the context, organizations, key relationships, etc., which you want to target?
- 4) What key institutions, social groups or relationships are unaffected by current tactics?
- 5) What tactics might be used to engage the areas currently unaffected?
- 6) Can potential allies be identified for building a more comprehensive and effective strategy?

One example of tactical mapping (of a local Underage Marriage):



## 2.7 A Problem for Analysis by Tactical Mapping: Underage Marriages

Child marriage is common in some countries of the Middle East. In Yemen, Syria and Palestine 25% to 30% of under-18s is already married, divorced or widowed. Political and social pressures can demand male babies as soon as possible. Child mothers are exposed to early sexual relations, pregnancies and childbirth before they are physically mature and psychologically ready. They have limited access to and use of contraception, health services and information. Pregnancy-related deaths are the leading cause of mortality in 15-19-year-old girls. Those aged under 15 years are five times more likely to die than those aged over 20. And for every woman who dies in childbirth, some 15 to 30 survive but suffer chronic disabilities like obstetric fistula. Prevalence is highest in the most impoverished communities in Africa and Asia.

Young brides pay a heavy price and so do their children, who are twice as likely to die in infancy than the babies of older mothers. These children are more likely to grow up in

poverty and stay out of the reach of health services and schools. Families who see child marriage as strengthening the family are incorrect.

In some cultures early arranged or enforced marriage is seen as a way of safeguarding the girl and strengthening the family. Governments are often unwilling or unable to enforce existing laws, or to update discrepancies between national laws on marriage age and entrenched customary and religious laws. And the international development community has largely failed to target this issue.

The Human Rights approach suggests some initial steps: for an NGO that wants to get involved, this is the time to examine the situation in its own locality, perhaps with Tactical Mapping.

***Possible tactics***

Steps at National level would ensure that governments amend or introduce new legislation to:

- make 18 the minimum age of marriage for both males and females;
- enforce the registration of all births and marriages;
- include parents, religious and community leaders, opinion makers, teachers and so on in this process. Their participation is essential in efforts to reinforce and implement policies, laws and changes in behaviour.
- strengthen the role of community-based organizations, especially women's and young people's organizations, to enable them better to engage with community and religious leaders.

This is a way to start – but a great deal of work would still be necessary

**EXAMPLE:** 15.4.09 Times newspaper: "Saudi Arabia says it is 'going to regulate' underage marriages after courts agreed to a marriage of a 60 year old man and an 8 year-old girl".  
30.4.09 update: "The girl has filed for divorce".

### 3. The Skills a Human Rights NGO needs

An NGO can start to work out the problems it wants to tackle and the kind of projects it would like to run. At the same time it has to start building essential skills. It has to think about funding. It will probably find itself organising training. And it needs to ensure that its core orientation is sound. This section covers the following:

- 3.1 Where to start?**
- 3.2 A Health Check for The HR Approaches of your NGO & Members**
- 3.3 Professionalisation before fundraising**
- 3.4 Finding the money**
- 3.5 Interviewing, Listening & Training**

#### 3.1 Where to Start?

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Begin by looking at the thinking within your NGO. In the West, people concerned with Human Rights may be concerned with the Erosion of Liberties and the Representativeness of the Democratic Process. But the major freedoms are, to some extent, in place. Many NGOs are therefore concerned with the rights of minority groups, the aged, the disabled etc. However, in the Middle East and North Africa, Human Rights are viewed differently because the major problems listed above are still all around. So the issues that occupy Human Rights NGOs most of the time concern Justice, the Law, democratic representation etc.

- Who works in your NGO? Are you all able-bodied women and men between 25 and 50? If you are, then it is not surprising that you are concerned with the lack of rights that affect your daily lives. But what about the Rights of the weakest members of your society: the disabled, the elderly, the poorest of the poor?
- Looking again at your NGO, you would not bar the door to a blind person or an eighty-year-old who came to join and had skills to contribute. And already you care for groups other than your own. You who are male are listening to the arguments for Gender equality. You are beginning, even, to give up some power to make it happen. You are probably active in the care of widows and orphans. You see clearly the need to help people disabled while fighting in a good cause or by a landmine. You all realise that you will (it is hoped) grow old, and some of you could acquire a physical disability or mental health problem – or perhaps your children. You need to set priorities but you know, clearly, that everyone has Human Rights and needs.

#### 3.2 A Health Check for The HR Approaches of your NGO & Members

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If you think about what “Human rights” means, as applied to groups, it means that each member has a share of the basics, of physical resources like food, shelter and money; that each person has the right to an opinion and is listened to; that everyone is treated with dignity and respect; and that everyone is able to work out a future in which their uniqueness and talents are used.

If your NGO is to work in the HR field, you need to ask whether each of you personally – and the NGO as a whole – has translated these principles into practice in three areas:

1. The family of each person involved with your NGO
2. The NGO itself
3. Any other institution with which your NGO is involved – schools, hospitals, residential care homes or jails

Each person in turn needs to ask themselves whether they are good examples. If your family or your NGO are places of tyranny and neglect, what does that teach others? If you are involved in a school through your own children or through the NGO, how are the children treated: like cockroaches to be stomped on – or like flowers to be watered and encouraged?

Look inside yourself. It seems to be true everywhere, if you think about it, that people who talk a good talk but behave differently in their personal life – these people do not implement people-friendly projects. (And remember that if you are one of these: **we can all change**).

### ***The HIV/AIDS example***

HIV/AIDS is an example of another field where NGOs can play a crucial role and all NGOs should monitor in their area. People have the Right to good information to protect their health, especially against life-threatening illnesses like HIV/AIDS. Prevalence rates are still relatively low in MENA (about 0.3%) but could start to increase steeply. However the figures available are not very trustworthy. Meanwhile the community stays ill-informed, with, for example, teachers in Iran afraid to have a HIV positive child in their class and women afraid to use a shop run by a HIV positive owner.

The World Bank is emphasising the need for early intervention with:

- a) advocacy to get HIV/AIDS on the Development agenda of each country
- b) increased surveillance
- c) involving civil society and NGOs in educating children, in finding the best additional strategies to limit spread, and in capacity building.



**Chinks in the Wall of Silence** around the disease has been made so far in **Syria**, where a community-based HIV/AIDS education programme for out-of-school youth has been developed; **Jordan**, which has made antiviral medication available free and in **Iran** and **Tunisia**. These countries can draw on the Global Fund to Fight AIDS. But it needed and still needs strong political will.

So what is happening in your country? Is countering AIDS an area where your own NGO might do rather well?

## **3.3 Professionalisation before fundraising**

Finding the money is an area of great difficulty for most small NGOs. This chapter may not seem very encouraging but to the best of the authors' knowledge it is realistic. So ask yourself if you are ready.

Before you begin to fundraise there are steps you need to have taken first. You need to have made some progress in the process of professionalism. One part of this is to have a



good Project Proposal for which you can request funding. Only then are you ready to start finding money for the project.

### ***The Process of making your NGO more Professional***

**Starting to Work:** It is more professional if, before you start fundraising, you can show that you have practical skills and have experience of practical work. This means starting to get experience in your field. For example, you might volunteer at the nearest Youth Club, perhaps starting a weekly discussion group on democracy. If you can get bus fares from family members, you can start to work without pay. Our organisation ([networklearning.org](http://networklearning.org)) does it, with occasional help from family members.

**Building professional structures within your NGO:** This means establishing your board, registering legally and building the capacity of your board members and staff – including those responsible for funding. If your group is Community-based you will become stronger as you plan and work together and get experienced. You can fund-raise locally for small concrete activities, such as the salary of a counsellor or money for a workshop. And consider a Workshop on Funding.

#### **EXAMPLE: A Workshop on Fundraising for a Human Rights NGO**

One NGO organised a Workshop on Fundraising for both staff and Board Members. Together, over three days, the participants worked through the following items:

- a brief evaluation of fundraising in the past years plus conclusions
- how to plan the funding needs and set realistic objectives for the following two years
- development of a fundraising strategy, including: planning/timing of projects, organisational costs and funding needs
- its current fundraising capacity, human resource development and organisational development
- how to target donors, both local and international – and what their requirements are
- how to write a proposal for project funding and an outline for financial reporting
- an outline of a Strategic Plan for implementation of fundraising

Board members and staff followed the Workshop together, strengthening their commitment.

### ***Some issues in professionalisation that are especially important for fundraising***

- Being clear about your own identity. Each NGO is, in its own way, unique and special. Is that uniqueness clear in your NGO documents?
- Do you have the basic documents of your NGO assembled?
- Are you chronicling and making known your NGO activities and achievements?
- Are you networking, sending NGO workers to meetings, sharing papers and visits?
- Are you part of HR Umbrella organisations in your country?
- Do you have a website to continue the process of making yourself known?
- Do you have a good Project Proposal for which you are applying for funding? Most funding is not for NGO expenses but for projects. If you do not have a Project Proposal, now is the time for planning and writing.

### 3.4 Finding the money

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#### ***Some practical points***

Big funders do not pay for salaries or administrative costs. These are the kinds of costs that you need to cover through your local supporters. Sooner or later those supporters will ask what percentage of donations goes to administration and salaries. It should not be more than 20%. The national registration of your NGO and the formal approval of your project by your government are usually required by funders.

*It helps to start with a positive and realistic attitude – accepting that this activity may be long-term and that there are no quick fixes, no magic shortcuts.*

#### ***What type of funding do you want?***

- a) **Using the community as your funding base:** some NGOs go for many small local contributors. This means that you are growing local roots and a local constituency. Keep in mind that in return for contributions, these people would wish for a voice in policy-making; your NGO structure must take this into account by holding Open Days, consultation sessions etc. You can also look for ways of raising funds locally; for example, in addition to their main tasks, NGOs working in Water & Sanitation can sell water; women's organisations can start producing saleable goods. In addition small local fundraising is attractive to donors and contributes to the independence of the NGO.
- b) **Organisations at the National Level:** funding from local organisations has a number of advantages. The procedures are often easier to follow. And international donors want to know that local sources have been tried. You could apply for funds to:
  - Rotary or Lions clubs, mosques, hospitals, local business associations, the 'rich' in your community etc.
  - Government or District institutions. Funds are sometimes available, especially if working in co-operation in the same field of interest. Think also of secondment of staff, use of their logistics etc.
  - Foreign Embassies sometimes have funds available for small-scale projects. For example, Dutch Embassies have special funding sources for "social strengthening" in Turkey and Morocco called MATRA/KAP projects.
  - National Umbrella Organisations – for an HR NGO, probably the Human Rights Umbrella organisation.
- c) **International Funders:** you may want to look for International funders. Remember that if you end up with only one or two funders, you may find yourself dependent on people and decisions made in another country. Remember, too, that any big funder has specific groups that it helps – so if you do not qualify, do not apply.

These International agencies include missions, aid agencies and other groups, both religious and secular. Most of them are based in the North, in Europe, North America and Australia. A list of names may be obtained from national and voluntary organisations or from embassies. More names may come from a web search. There are also the United Nations Agencies such as WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, the European Commission (EC), the World Bank (WB), and Asian Development Bank (ADB). Be aware that at country level, these big agencies may be using funding as

a way to influence issues like Governance. But at NGO level they do not usually support small-scale projects directly.

In addition there are the big International NGOs such as the Red Crescent, SCF and OXFAM. Funds from these sources are more likely to be available via national umbrella organisations. The Regional or Country Offices of International NGOs are often the place where project proposals are considered and funding is allocated – not the Main Office in Europe or America.

- If you want to approach an organisation such as OXFAM, try to find out the address of its national or regional office and make your first contact by post or a hand/delivered letter rather than by e-mail. The NGO's website should tell you a lot. But it does not usually provide a good route to apply for funding. You need to work hard work using your search engine to find the right INGO. With each, do you meet their stated criteria?
- NGOs in poorer Moslem countries might hope for funding from the richer countries of the Middle East. But this is not as yet part of the mentality in that region. Only the Aga Khan website offers support in building Civil Society.

By now your list, it is hoped, is an initial prospect list of about ten to fifteen funders. Do not attempt a scatter approach, sending requests to a wide group of organisations. It can damage your organisation's credibility.

### ***How to apply for funds***

You have your list of the ten to fifteen most likely funding sources. From colleagues and website, get as much information as possible about each organisation, its thinking and its procedures for application. If you can, find out which person to approach within the organisation, so you can address them personally. This works best via mutual contacts. Write a letter that can be posted or sent by email. This activity is crucial because it is how you tell the bigger world who you are. Use your personal title. Write if possible to the person dealing with funds. Introduce yourself and give a brief explanation of your organisation, its objectives, and your intentions. Ask if their organisation would consider a project proposal such as the one you have written. Ask for details of any format they use for project proposals. If the email is addressed to a general target like "contact us", ask for a name and an email address for the person who looks at proposals. This email or letter should normally not be longer than two-thirds of a page.

- Make a copy of your letter to keep. If you can, follow up with a phone call about one week later

Remember that the funding agency has a hundred applications for every slice of money. So do not take a rejection personally. Around 90% of all proposals fail. If yours fails, write a brief letter or email to the funder asking the reasons for the rejection and use the feedback to improve your approach.

### ***Co-operating with funding organisations***

Building a good, trusted relationship with your donor is very important. Often, co-operation is not easy. The donor asks for long and complex reports, transfers of funds are often delayed, communication problems are common, etc. But do send reports as requested, prepare accurate budgets, and keep costs as low as possible. *Build a relationship of trust by acting trustworthy.*

### 3.5 Interviewing, Listening & Training

#### ***Taking a History***

Human Rights are about individuals, what has happened to them and is happening. HR workers need to take accurate accounts of past events – to take a history from an individual. This is important for two reasons:

- If it is done well, then the individual telling their story undergoes a process of confirmation that they matter, that the painful events in their past at least will be used for the benefit of everyone. The process can be an affirmation of the individual's value.
- Accurate recording will be part of good information collection. The results can be used in lobbying, information exchange etc.

#### ***Active Listening & Dialogue***

If a HR worker wants to help clients with painful histories to discuss the events of the past, then the first thing they have to learn is how to listen. Many educated and professional people find this very difficult. The stages through which they may pass are:

- 1 **knowing how to do all the talking:** probably very easy but not very helpful.
- 2 **allowing the interviewee to do some of the talking:** now the interviewer has to find ways to give the interviewee permission to take over, to talk and to share the control of the interview. The interviewer must learn how to give up being the boss.
- 3 **having the interviewee doing most of the talking:** during this kind of dialogue the interviewer conveys understanding, compassion and solidarity with the minimum of words but with a lot of body language. The way to get to this last point is to learn how to listen actively. This is done by practice. It is a skill. Can you form a group to practice?

#### ***Using the Information***

This subject is discussed more in section 5.2 but remember that for an interviewee, it is important to know that the information is used, not just stuck in a filing cabinet. Interviewees often say, "We want people to know what happened to us".

#### ***Training***

NGOs are constantly involved in, among other activities, helping people to understand their rights and the law, in getting people to realise that they are valuable and then giving them the skills to organise and protest. All these activities come under the heading of training. When you consciously plan a training activity it helps to be very clear about what you want to do – because then you will select the right teaching methods. All training involves the passing over of three things:

- **Knowledge/information**  
(Telling people about their rights under the law is conveying information or knowledge)
- **Attitudes**  
(Persuading a group of survivors of physical violation that they are valuable - this helps to change their attitudes)



- **Skills**

(Training people in refugee camps to form groups and start activities is about skills – skills in decision-making, communication, organising and perhaps manual skills.

***Why Skills are important***

When planning training, it is important to spend time on skills – because unless people are able to act differently at the end of the training, what was the point?

**EXAMPLE:** A short course was organised for HR workers who were planning to help women who had undergone an episode of sexual violation. At the end the participants could describe with passion how appalling such events were and how the memories were hard to live with. But they had not learnt skills to pass along – like how to help the women find medical assistance – nor skills to enable them to organise themselves so that they could meet, discuss and support each other in practical ways.

A lot of training falls into this kind of trap. It can be avoided if you plan carefully.

You need to be clear about *what the participants should be able to do* at the end of the training. Then, for each skill, you work out the information and attitude change needed to ensure that the skill can be used.

Write all this as learning objectives. For example:

***Learning Objectives to ensure that Skills are Central***

*By the end of training, Participants will be able to:*

- a) *Describe the issues of police brutality in their community (Knowledge)*
- b) *Treat people who have been victims with respect (Attitudes)*
- c) *Use local & on-line networks to identify victims of police brutality and interview them (Skills)*
- d) *Etc.*

***Planning the Timetable so that Learning Objectives can be achieved***

Start planning the course and noting the kind of activity planned for each section of time.

- Lectures will convey information but not change attitudes or convey skills.
- Good games will help with attitude change and decision-making.
- For skills, you need practice in real life or in role-plays.

***Training for Skills – Practice, Role-plays and Check-lists***

How did you, personally, learn to drive a car? Or make a pancake? Think back. You practiced. If, in training, people do not practice, they may finish the training without the skill. All new skills need enough practice so that people can do them well. The practice can be in real situations or in role-plays. But practicing skills takes time. Suppose one skill is to give a short piece of information and check that it is remembered. How many practices do you need? How long does each take? Could you have a checklist so that the standard is maintained? But in reality, people planning a training session often do not want to block too much of the time for practice. So skills are not properly taught.

**EXAMPLE:** A successful training programme for rural women in Turkey: this gave women, among other things, skills and support so that they could negotiate within their family. Afterwards a significant proportion of the women who had reported domestic violence said they had negotiated ways to decrease or stop it.

## 4. Building Cultures that favour Human Rights

It may be that interventions in this area are the most rewarding in terms of the effort involved and the long-term effects. Four areas are discussed in five chapters in this sector:

- 4.1 Democracy – the key foundation of Human Rights
- 4.2 Building Democracy into School Curriculum
- 4.3 Empowering Women: Palestine
- 4.4 Negotiation, Conflict Resolution & Peace Building
- 4.5 Countering Corruption in the MENA Region

### 4.1 Democracy – the key foundation of Human Rights

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**A definition of Democracy:** there is no absolute consensus but people use as definitions “one person, one vote” or “the people ruling themselves for themselves” or, perhaps the most popular, “the people control the decisions”. And in order for democracy to exist, it relies on a model of society wherein differences can be managed – and people whose opinions are different can be respected.

**To make this model possible,** the following conditions should be met:

1. The existence of institutions including an independent judiciary, the guarantee of academic research, freedom of expression for journalists and the holding of elections that are transparent and fair.
2. The inclusion of some principles in the constitution – that the majority makes the decisions, the minorities are protected, citizens are equal under the law and that there is freedom of expression.
3. Most importantly, an overall commitment to the principles of democracy and to educating citizens in these principles. In turn, citizens should be ready to express the voice of opposition but also to negotiate, to accept the majority’s opinion and respect those who differ from themselves.

Abiding by democratic principles also means that citizens at every level accept the rules of the democratic game and support them, even if the results are not what they personally wanted. So any democratic change-over from one ruling group to another should be as friendly as possible but must allow for disappointment and bad feeling.

#### ***How to make citizens commit themselves to democracy***

In the Arab world, citizens suspect any call for democracy by governments. Institutions are not independent. Minorities control the decision-making process. The Law has no integrity. So citizens shun politics and activities that promote democracy. Serious modifications are necessary:

- change the electoral code
- make amendments in the constitution
- elect mayors directly

These changes would create a new kind of representation. Though in practice such modifications, on the institutional level, happen only gradually. And at the same time a

process of educating citizens, especially youth, is necessary to create a new generation that understands democratic citizenship. But can or should the government really influence citizens? How far could this influence go? And are citizens themselves ready to be educated?

It could be argued that the task of the government is not to intervene directly but to creating an atmosphere in which democracy can flourish. If so, what are the direct or indirect possibilities for the government?

### ***Maintenance of democracy***

Basic human nature is not democratic. But the construction of a democratic society is possible. It is an ongoing process, often an ongoing struggle and it changes over time. It is impossible for democracy to survive unless citizens continue to play their democratic roles. When the majority chooses an undemocratic person or party, even in a democratic way, it kills democracy – as it did with Hitler in Germany. If institutions are absent in a country, the result is wars and massacres as happened in Rwanda.

### ***Social influences and democracy***

These influences are neither positive nor negative in themselves. But, they play a role, directly or indirectly, in the ongoing democratic education of citizens.

- 1 **Individuality:** this is growing in the Arab world as people find more choices in their lives. But it can lead to a boycott of democracy. Where individuality becomes too dominant, it is more difficult to convince people of the importance of working with groups.
- 2 **Bureaucracy:** this exists to organize the relationship between citizens and the administration - in theory, within a framework of transparency and equality. But in the Arab world it is instead a snake's nest of bribery, nepotism and inaction. The administration has become a tool for controlling citizens and limiting freedoms, resulting again in citizens shunning politics.
- 3 **Globalization:** with globalization, some important decisions both political and economic take place outside the country. So the scope of controlling political decisions in a country is subject to international contracts.
- 4 **Privatization** has influenced the relationship between what belongs to the government and what is private. It has even reached sectors that previously belonged only to the government – health, education and culture. It removes these institutions from government control and makes the best quality services available only to those with money, strengthening class differences.
- 5 **Pluralism:** A characteristic of pluralism is that it creates an atmosphere for various ideas and identities. It is a strong weapon against monopolies. However, too pluralistic a society can have a vacuum of principles and clear objectives.

### **EXAMPLE: Opinion and counter opinion**

Dutch finance budgeted for some projects in Morocco. Traditionally all planning and decisions would be made in the Netherlands. However it was decided to move these processes to Morocco creating the chance for a serious dialogue between different political sectors with different ideologies. Representative groups were involved and each was given the opportunity to express their opinions. Each group, the liberal, the Islamist and the left wing, presented their views while voicing and showing respect for the others. It was civilized discussion, a long way from the language of violence and exclusion.

### ***The institutions that can cement the principles of democracy***

- **Family:** the family has an important role in education. In the Arab world, family relations are based on obedience and submission and characterized by the parents, especially the father, making all serious decisions. The male sex is given advantages over the female. The ideal role that the family can play is a mixture; it delivers a regular education, it develops children's skills and teaches them to use their mental abilities to discuss with others and reach joint decisions.
- **School:** It is not enough that schoolbooks should talk about democracy and its institutions. Students should be given opportunities to practice and work within democratic structures in the school. Most students are interested in the relationships between the administration, the teachers and the students. And students need to learn how to deal with plural ideas and good ways to solve conflicts. It is also important to teach students that problems can be solved peacefully through dialogue, communication and respect for the other side.

**EXAMPLE:** even if education is non-democratic, it has to teach students how to practice democracy outside class. For example, students can contribute to writing the school rules and take part in meetings between teachers and administration.

- **Civil society:** This is the body of institutions and associations made up of ordinary citizens, outside the government and run by volunteers. It creates a culture that guides consensus and difference. For example, the USA and England are more democratic than Italy or Germany not because of the existence of institutions but because of the size and role of their civil society.
- **Associations:** these can serve democracy in two ways:
  - 1 They can be schools of democracy; in their daily functioning they teach citizens the principles of democracy such as cooperation and negotiation; they also teach that the decisions of the majority have to be accepted even if individuals do not agree.
  - 2 Civil society has to provide efficient criticism through pressure groups and politicians. Democracy cannot exist unless there is a vibrant opposition, so it's better to have objections whenever possible. For example, associations in Eastern Europe helped bringing down communism.

**EXAMPLE: A neighbourhood association**

In one urban neighbourhood there were increasing complaints about garbage thrown into the street, insufficient lampposts and increasing numbers of rats. Individuals had been trying to contact those responsible in the town offices or the police, but with no result. And worse: the people in charge failed even to listen. Conditions in the neighbourhood got worse.

Two men and a woman volunteered to set up an association to protect the interests of the residents. They contacted everybody in the neighbourhood and arranged a meeting. Afterward the meeting one group prepared a document to be given to the authorities. Another established the association, and its goals, registering it; a treasurer began to collect membership fees. The association met the authorities of the city hall and the police. Gradually the problems began to be resolved. And the association appointed janitors and night guards paid partly by the city and partly by the Association.



- **Neighbourhoods:** these influence group management. When residents unite in unions and associations to protect themselves, it is an excellent teaching experience in democracy. Citizens not only observe democracy in practice but live it too.

### ***Forms of citizen participation***

- 1 The government takes decisions and then allows associations and individuals to comment on them. *OR*
- 2 The initiative can be taken by the government or the individual. In either case, the citizen can voice his opinion before the decision. *OR*
- 3 The government sees citizens and civil society as active partners; many individuals take part in the decision-making. This approach leads to the proper practice of democracy.

With possibilities 2 and 3, one criticism can be that most contributors to the discussion are from a limited group of people and associations that do not represent the majority. Also, for true participation, citizens need sufficient knowledge. Then they cannot be exploited.

### ***Questions for the Board members of an NGO to ask themselves:***

- Have we created a democratic atmosphere at work?
- Are we all aware of the various opinions around us?
- Is there enough room for individuals and groups to express their opinions?
- Do people with ethnic, religious or political backgrounds different to the majority have the chance to express their opinions?
- Do we teach individuals and groups the right way to respect the policy of difference?
- How do we make decisions?
- Are colleagues included in this process?
- Is dealing with differences part of the culture of the NGO?

### ***Questions for the Director of an NGO to ask himself:***

- *Can the policies I adopt influence the practice of democracy?*
- *Am I open-minded concerning the decisions I make?*
- *Do I give associations and independent people the opportunity to influence my decisions?*
- *Do I create institutions to control my decisions so that I am not a dictator and one-dimensional person?*

**EXAMPLE of a step in greater democracy:** in 2005 in Kuwait, women gained the right to vote and run for office. In 2009, the first women were elected to the Kuwaiti Parliament – four of them!

## 4.2 Building Democracy into the School Curriculum

A number of countries, including those involved with the Israel-Palestinian conflict are hoping to influence the development of their future citizens. They are doing this through schools, introducing key topics and experiences. Here are three examples:

**EXAMPLE: Mend Palestine** has a major project with a staff of eleven United Nations volunteers, working with seven schools in the rural West Bank. The project is called “Choose a Future”. It involves a curriculum and training fourteen teachers and 150 girls in fields from “reproductive health” and “realizing dreams”, to “conflict resolution” and participatory videos. The Curriculum Project now aims to increase the emphasis on human rights and non-violence within the Palestinian school curriculum, with the launch of a book titled “Rights First...” in Ramallah. This vital project has been generously supported by the European Union’s “Partnership for Peace” Programme for over three years.

**EXAMPLE: Civic Education & the Importance of voting in Palestine, Jordan & Lebanon**

This project targets school-age youth in an attempt to build and enhance their knowledge of civic rights. People with expertise in civic education are working actively and collectively in raising awareness, building capacities and providing needed skills and information. The three projects aim to create empowered and well-informed teachers and students who will be able to carry on relevant activities beyond the life of the project itself. One of the most effective tools being built is a sustainable link between the Ministries of Education in the targeted countries and the civil society sector through their work with the schools. Significantly, the implementers of the three projects gained access to the ministries of education in their countries to enable them to work and operate in elementary and secondary schools. They all work with teachers and may also engage with personnel from the ministries of education. The Lebanese centre has an agreement with the Education Ministry allowing them to suggest amendments to developing school curricula.

**EXAMPLE: in Albania**, an Islamic country outside the region, a political break was exploited to develop a curriculum on Human Rights and introduce it into the schools.

*We teach our children democracy  
when we say...*



*“I am listening”*



*“your mother and I will discuss it”*



*“play nicely and share your toys”*



*“take turns”*

### 4.3 Empowering Women – an example from Palestine

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In 2001, the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) started two Women and Family Empowerment Model Centres – a new kind of Community Centre – in Jabalia and Nuseirat. The project had technical assistance from the World University Service of Canada and funding from CIDA. Its aim was to provide technical and vocational training for Palestinian women. The project ran until 2007 when UNDP took over.

Staff and volunteers received training in curriculum development, training skills, planning micro enterprise and business plans, childcare, etc. Over 500 volunteers participated in the planning and implementation of activities, and community ownership remains the most valuable feature of this project.

The group developed courses, manuals and materials to train local women in business plans, child-care, reading and accounting, wax and soap transformation, woodworking, food production and other skills.

#### **Results**

- The centres' activities were met with overwhelming enthusiasm, with constant client visits to the centres.
- Close to 85,000 people benefited from the different activities and programmes. Over 90% were women.
- Some women were able to complete their Primary School education and become eligible for decent jobs. It was estimated that over 280 households increased their income. In one year for example, through the programme, 65 women found permanent employment and 400 female graduates gained marketable skills.

These skills enabled women to enter the labour market and/or start small enterprises:

**EXAMPLE:** "Two years ago, I divorced and nobody took care of me, so I decided to come to the centre and to enrol in the remedial lessons for young women. After graduating, I passed the final exam for Grade 12, signed up to college and started my studies in nursing!"

Some gained more confidence, self-reliance and self-esteem:

**EXAMPLE:** Am Said, 40 years old: "I enrolled in the literacy course 3 years ago so I could learn to read the Holy Qur'an and to learn to write. I also had a small farm and wanted to acquire arithmetical skills and not be cheated at the market. I wanted to gain more independence."

Another – but unintended – result of the centres' activities has been to help women break from the isolation formed by many years of military occupation and insecurity. The centres provided an opportunity to socialize, learn and meet other women with similar concerns and problems, serving as a safe haven and community focal point.

**EXAMPLE:** Kareema, a young woman living in the Middle Area, participated in The Water Campaign initiated by Nuseirat Centre. This campaign helped her to raise her awareness about water issues in the region, and also gave her the opportunity to visit other villages and to develop leadership skills.

The Centres also held Health days for Children; for example, in 2006 they helped nearly 2,000 children, according to their parents, with both physical and psychological issues.

Later, the political events of the region meant that in 2009 the Gaza Strip was cut off and its economy nearly destroyed. Opportunities for employment and for starting small businesses went from limited to scarce. But skills remain, waiting for better times.

#### 4.4 Negotiation, Conflict Resolution & Peace Building

**EXAMPLE:** In 2007 a Yemeni NGO, the NDI, did a field study on armed conflict in three governorates. Over 158 conflicts had occurred between 2001 and 2005 involving 221 tribes. Only 6 percent of these conflicts were resolved. Tribal conflicts seem to be on the rise and the authorities rarely intervene. Some conflicts were ignited by establishing development projects in certain areas rather than others.

The NGO began a workshop programme. It involves the Higher National Committee for Combating Revenge (HNCCR), a government body, plus three local NGOs. A database has been created and workshops train those involved, in managing and analysing armed conflicts. Now they plan training for trainers; also an awareness campaign targeting students, mosque preachers, women and tribal leaders. A separate NGO, Islamic Relief, started a two-year programme aimed at reducing violent conflict in the country, through running workshops. Participants learn better to understand conflict with presentations on how problems start and get complicated, the motivation of the parties involved and who benefits, the availability of arms, helping to spread conflict, and the role of mediation and arbitration. So far 665 individuals have participated.

##### *Aspects of Conflict Resolution*

- a) **Listen first; talk second:** to solve a problem effectively you have to understand the point of view of everyone involved. It may also be important to make good listening a pre-condition for both sides before any negotiation.
- b) **Insist on good behaviour from everyone:** participants can be asked to commit to calmness –no loss of temper – and civility during the negotiation.
- c) **Keep people and problems separate.** By separating the problem from the person, real issues can be debated without damaging working relationships.
- d) **Set out the “Facts”:** past history may be better established with each group separately and by avoiding any blame. Try to establish the objective, observable elements that would have an impact on any decision.
- e) **Negotiate towards win/win by starting with the interests of each side.** If the process of negotiation is like a war, only one side can win – and this sets the scene for further conflict. Instead, the people involved, including whoever is managing the process, can look not at the stated position of each side but at their underlying common interests – finding out what all parties want long-term, and what they would accept to reach a decision that benefits both parties. If the negotiation covers more than one issue, there is more room for both sides to win. The sides always have some interests in common – for example to see their children grow up in safety and with some prospects.
- f) **The role of a third party:** in situations where one party fears that they will be double-crossed, the role of the NGO can be that of independent monitor, checker or chair.
- g) **Explore options together:** be open to the idea that a third position may exist, and that you can get to this idea jointly.

- h) **Building peace:** the people who foster feuds, the chiefs and the angry young men – these are the part of the communities which starts feuds with other communities. But Peace Building work focuses on everybody else – the students, the preachers in the mosques, the women and tribal leaders – all the people who have reason not to like feuds and are seriously ready to work for peace. A process of discussion with the community may bring out sensible tactics through which peace can be built. Peace building is about the process rather than just the product; the role for the NGO is that of the external third party, helping local people to find their own self-sustaining approaches that encourage reconciliation, non-violence, co-existence, justice, human rights and peace.

**Resource:** Peace building Toolkit. This toolkit aims to assist anyone who wishes to start a campaign or organize an activity around issues of peace and conflict. It was designed in particular for members of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

## 4.5 Countering Corruption in the MENA Region

Corruption in the MENA region is said to be increasing. The results are not only difficult for individuals but also negative for the general development of the country and region.

Here is a definition: *corruption involves behaviour on the part of officials, either elected or appointed, who are improperly enriching themselves, or those close to them, by misusing their power.*

Below are examples from two areas where corruption is involved and NGOs can play a role. The first concerns water. In the MENA region the domain of water involves huge demand, a scarce resource and venal officials – so what is the likelihood of fair distribution?

### EXAMPLE: Water and Corruption

In “Water and Corruption: The TI Global Corruption Report” [link g)], Transparency International says that “Increased participation has been documented throughout the Global Corruption Report 2008 as a mechanism for reducing undue influence and capture of the sector. Participation by marginalised groups in water budgeting and policy development... adding a pro-poor focus to spending...(plus)...community involvement in selecting the site of rural wells and managing irrigation systems...(plus)...civil society participation in auditing, water pollution mapping and performance monitoring of water utilities – all this creates important additional checks and balances... turning participation into effective public oversight.”

– Clearly this is an area where NGOs should be involved. What about yours?

### EXAMPLE: Fighting Corruption in the Lebanon Construction industry

“If average citizens in the Lebanon need to obtain a construction permit they have to rely on specialist brokers because obtaining a permit involves five different institutions and several departments within each. It can take up to a year at prices almost double the official rate”.

So the Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA) published a booklet that simplifies the procedures and features the documents, fees and average time required. They first identified the reasons for corruption, which included: citizens’ ignorance of their rights; the indifference of civil servants who consider bribery a bonus for efficient work; a lack of monitoring and control; weakness of public complaint mechanisms; and the dissipation of responsibility due to the high number of public institutions involved.

## **An Introduction to Human Rights in the Middle East & North Africa – a Guide for NGOs**

Now the booklet is distributed free to citizens, NGOs, municipalities, architects, engineers and lawyers. Its purpose is to make transactions transparent and to empower members of the public by setting out their rights with regard to the administration. It also seeks to equip applicants with the tools and knowledge needed to bypass the corrupt practices of state employees. If the official deviates from the official description of the transaction as detailed in the booklet, the applicant can hold the official accountable.

The LTA later put their experience into a report presented to several government offices, including the office of the minister of state for administrative development, the urban planning directorate, the association of architects and engineers and to parliament.



## 5. Interventions

This section is about working in a more direct way, which may include direct conflict and personal risk.

- 5.1 Human Rights Defenders and Legitimacy
- 5.2 Recording & Reporting HR Abuses
- 5.3 Lobbying for Groups/Advocacy for causes
- 5.4 Using the Rescue Triangle

### 5.1 Human Rights Defenders and Legitimacy

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**EXAMPLE:** In August 2006, the Iranian Interior Ministry attempted to ban the Centre for Human Rights Defenders, co-founded by human rights lawyer and 2003 Nobel Peace Laureate, Shirin Ebadi. Its activities were declared illegal and the authorities announced that “violators” were to be prosecuted. The Centre had submitted documentation regarding its founding in 2002 but had not received a response, despite regulations that oblige the Interior Ministry to respond to applications within three months. For six years, the Centre and its members have been harassed. In 2006, the Interior Ministry said a permit would be issued “if changes were made to the [Centre’s] mission statement”. The Centre has continued to operate”.

**EXAMPLE: In Bahrain,** Human Rights Defenders can be prosecuted under provisions of the Penal Code that forbid acts such as “distributing falsehood and rumours” or “insulting the judiciary” Abdul Hadi al-Khawaja, former executive director of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, closed by order of the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry in September 2004, was sentenced in November 2004 to one year in prison on charges that included “inciting hatred” and accusing the authorities of corruption. He was released after being pardoned by the King of Bahrain.

#### ***What it means to be a human rights defender***

The term human rights defenders (HRDs) is used to encompass both human rights NGOs and individual human rights activists. Activities undertaken by HRDs in different countries might include:

- Being present at the side of somebody under threat of death or in areas where armed people are killing others, acting as a restraint and as a witness
- Chronicling HR violations, for example interviewing women in a refugee camp to find out their history
- Actively investigating HR stories, sometimes at personal risk

**EXAMPLE: In the Gulf States,** the glittering skyscrapers are constructed by immigrant labourers from all over Asia – and in one country the 300,000 workers are according to some, “treated like slave labour”. They report that when they arrive, many have their passports confiscated. They work 14 hours a day and live in cramped and unhygienic barracks. Their wages are less than a quarter of what they were promised. The country’s Jurist’s Association was pressing to get labour legislation into line with International Human Rights law – but its previous Head claims that he has had his lawyer’s licence and passport confiscated, and been warned that he and his children are now blacklisted as regards employment.

### ***The responsibility of a HR NGO in this field***

These examples should tell an NGO that if they start this work:

- **Workers doing HRD work need good skills**, for example interviewing skills and reporting skills. It would be unprofessional to start activities without giving staff the proper training.
- **The cost for staff may be high**. Find out how many investigative journalists have been killed in your country. Note that Humanitarian workers have a high incidence of burnout and depression. Think about protecting them physically, psychologically and spiritually through careful selection of who does what, through good training, access to psychological services, mutual support networks etc.
- **You need good plans and guidelines** – for the time when a worker needs to interview someone who could be hostile, or the occasion when abduction is a possibility. Know what precautions to take and who will do what.

### ***Do HRDs have Legitimacy?***

What does legitimacy of human rights defenders mean? Legitimacy is different from matters of formal or legal status (such as registration by the state, or consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council). The issue of legitimacy for human rights defenders may be compared to the right to a fair trial – in that *it must exist* as a matter of fact – *and be seen to exist*.

In some cases the problem lies with a true lack of legitimacy. Many organisations or individuals call themselves Human Rights Defenders or Human Rights NGOs, when in fact they are working to a fundamentally different agenda such as support for a political party. Because of their existence, legitimate human rights defenders may suffer from attacks on their credibility, suspicion regarding their motives and concerted attacks by state and non-state actors, all designed to deny their legitimacy.

They get accused of:

- associating with rebels or terrorists;
- being part of a political agenda or seeking to undermine the state;
- being only concerned with defending criminals;
- being self-serving – for example, that the NGO was only created to tap into foreign funding (being what is sometimes called ‘a briefcase NGO’)
- being unelected, unaccountable, unrepresentative etc.

Such allegations are sometimes based on fact; other times they are without foundation. The challenge for the legitimate HRD community is to distinguish correctly who is on the side of the angels and who is not.

### ***Strengthening legitimacy***

A strategic approach by HRDs to maximise their legitimacy could be planned at three levels, with these levels strengthening each other:

1. **At the level of individual NGOs and HRDs:** HRDs have said themselves that, to build a solid rebuttal of these attacks, organisations and individuals need to strengthen their professionalism – in impartiality, in consistency and in transparency.

**Codes of Conduct:** In some countries a form of self-regulation or code of conduct for HRDs has been adopted. Such a code is distinct from State registration requirements. These agreed standards often cover the fundamental issues listed above.

### ***Alliances with locally influential actors***

Local alliances are the next level for maximising recognition of the legitimacy of HRDs. Potential allies are available at all levels, even in the most repressive environments, including local, regional or national authorities and politicians; However, when authorities feel threatened, they may view HRDs as subversive rather than legitimate, and alliances need to be formed around non-state sources of influence.

What are the local channels that may be available to HRDs? These might be religious leaders; media; trades union; private businesses etc... and the public at large.

### ***International mechanisms and opportunities***

The UN declaration on human rights defenders was a major breakthrough. It was an explicit recognition by states of the legitimacy of the work of human rights defenders. The Declaration builds upon the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration and the general corpus of international human rights law. The report of the UN Secretary-General to the 2000 Commission on Human Rights Declaration refers to the minimum standards of recognised legitimacy to which HRDs are entitled.

The challenge for new NGOs or NGOs in a new political climate, in Iraq as elsewhere, is to identify strategies that not only maximise their legitimacy – but also ensure that this legitimacy is recognised. One strategy is to adopt a Code of Conduct. Another is to get Consultancy status with the UN.

## **5.2 Recording & Reporting HR Abuses**

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Reporting and recording of human rights abuses – this activity lays the foundation for taking concrete action. It supports impartial and accurate research and investigations of human rights violations or abuses. It provides evidence for further legal action. In addition, reporting and recording in the right way is crucial for keeping track of the development of important human rights issues.

Recording can be done through using simple incident sheets, standard reporting forms or computer databases. The choice of method depends on the context and the time available to prepare the report. Material to be recorded is sourced in different ways. Consider one of these - interviews with witnesses, victims and if possible perpetrators. Each category of interviewee is handled differently; special consideration is provided to the needs of each and the kind of information that needs to be recorded. In an interview session that requires on-site investigation, a fact-finding team involving members with different skills can contribute various strengths to the recording and report writing.

In order to get as wide as perspective as possible, the fact-finding for the report can involve partnership with others such as the community, the government or civil society.

**To write an effective human rights report** from the material recorded, the report writer must be familiar with the issue. The report should be drafted with the purpose of inspiring the reader into a reaction and then into action against the human rights abuse.

To ensure the relevance of the human rights report, ideally the document should have a governing idea – reflected in its title – that is supported by facts, figures and opinions (for example previous history of human rights abuses, patterns discerned, numbers,

conventions ratified, human rights laws) in the body of the report. The governing idea should be supported with a limited number of other ideas, which should be logically ordered towards a conclusion. It is important to make the document as easy to read as possible as well as believable.

Reports by governments in compliance with international human rights treaty obligations have specific guidelines. States parties to treaties have a duty to file regular compliance reports. NGOs write shadow reports. The reports outline the legislative, judicial, policy and other measures, which they have or have not taken to ensure the rights enjoyed in the covenant.

Recording is important for both State parties and NGOs as both are required to provide detailed data on the degree to which the rights are implemented and difficulties faced. A set of reporting guidelines specifying information required is usually provided.

### 5.3 Lobbying for Groups & Advocacy for causes

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#### **Definitions**

- **Lobbying** is the practice of influencing decisions made by government. It includes all attempts to influence legislators and officials, whether by other legislators, constituents or organized groups.
- **Advocacy** is the activity of acting as a spokesperson for people or causes, again, with the aim of influencing decisions.

#### **Preparatory work for your NGO**

Once you have decided on the area where you want to work you need to do some preparation. You first need to:

- **understand the issue** really well – after all, you are ready to fight for it. Read everything you can find. Find experts and talk to them and discuss among yourselves.
- find out if there is any **national organisation** that shares your interest. It could be a political party or an issue party. Ask for a written briefing on their position and see how nearly your positions overlap. You will get further if you are part of a bigger organisation.
- or... **build your own group** of six to ten people – perhaps your NGO colleagues. And you can involve friends and new contacts. If you want to lobby your Member of Parliament, pick the group from people who are part of the member's constituency.
- **Understand your target group.**

#### ***If your target group is the legislative assembly and its members...***

As an example – if you decide to bring pressure on the legislature to ensure that the police force is controlled and acting within the law, then your target group is members of the legislative assembly.

- **Understanding Politicians:** You need to identify politicians who are open to change – who will listen. And then you need to analyse their motivation. Some politicians have kept some of their passion to serve the community and will respond to an appeal to their sense of Justice; some need re-election and respond to a fear of losing their voter base. Others respond to other forces; they might, for example,

listen to a religious leader. You may want to use a combination of approaches in your campaign.

- **Lobbying through letters & e-mails:** Professional lobbyists say that if you want to lobby a member of parliament, always send a letter not an email, because it is easy to ignore emails. Start with your own member and make sure that you work with people who also have the same member. First you will have:
  - found out the position of their party by asking for their position paper from party headquarters,
  - found out the member's voting record on related laws which should be a matter of public record, and
  - found out who gives them contributions and the political positions of those who give them contributions. These should be a matter of public record too.

In the letter say to whom in the media you are copying the letter.

**Awareness building Toolkit:** This toolkit aims to assist anyone who wishes to start a campaign or organize an activity around issues of peace and conflict. It was designed in particular for members of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

- **Petitions:** Would the politicians you are targeting respond to a petition? Nowadays many are organised on-line. The weaknesses of petitions are that it may be dangerous to sign with a real name, so people sign anonymously or with a fake name. The person petitioned can claim that the whole thing is a work of fiction. But the strength of a petition is increased if you can get real names of people from the constituency of the person petitioned.

Using **Mobile phones** has worked in the West where there is a specific action to promote:

**EXAMPLE:** In 2006 in Canada a campaign to stop the hunting of seals got 50,000 people to support a petition via mobile phone. 93% also gave their name, 68% their email.

**EXAMPLE:** The Amnesty campaign to stop torture: when interested parties replied via email or mobile phone they were then included in an online petition, and a pre-written email was sent immediately to the relevant authorities. A study analyses the effectiveness of this campaign.

- **Personal Meetings:** Try to set up a Meeting with your elected representative. While it's true that politicians are too busy to meet with most of their voters, it is also true that some instruct their staff to arrange meetings with the "right" people. So recruit the group with whom you will go.

Provide information to the representative in its simplest, most succinct and persuasive form. The intent is to promote dialogue and have a reasoned and reasonable exchange of views. This can be spoiled by misinformation or emotionalism. Meetings in the local office are better than meetings in the capital city.

It might also be useful to have a meeting with a responsible member of the elected representative's staff. Staff often tell the politician what to think. So be as polite with staff as you would be with the elected politician. He or she may know more about the subject than the legislator.

**EXAMPLE:** in one country a group made a film on why and how mothers die in childbirth, specifically for the Nation's politicians. The picture they painted was accurate but appalling. As a result, funding was voted to double the number of midwives to be trained and employed. The makers had thought very carefully about the role of emotion in this lobbying project.

- **Using the press & media:** Write a letter (or send a copy of the one to your representative) to the editor of a local newspaper or TV station connecting the issue to the elected official. This can be a very effective lobbying technique. Politicians can be sensitive to what is written about them or their performance in the Media.

**EXAMPLE:** In Algeria the NGO "Femmes en communication" has adopted working through the media as their main strategic form of lobbying for active citizenship. Through a website, different awareness campaigns (radio, TV, and newspaper), public debate with citizens and journalists, the training of journalists and other training on specific human rights, they have helped in changing public knowledge and opinion.

**EXAMPLE:** The Amana Media Initiative is an Asian network of journalists, community leaders, academics, non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives, and other professionals aiming to encourage contemporary debate between Muslims and other faith and secular communities about the role of Islam within today's social and political realities.

**EXAMPLE: A Turkish Campaign to influence Politicians**

Turkey is a nation with a big issue with corruption. The citizen reaction was mainly apathy. A group formed called Citizen Initiative for Constant Light. They launched a "call from citizen to citizen". Citizens throughout Turkey began turning their lights off at 9 pm every night – eventually 30 million lights. Then other professionals started creating messages and images to promote the campaign, including advertising professionals, filmmakers, graphic designers, illustrators, merchandising experts, journalists and experienced political activists. The Citizen Initiative created catchy slogans, and humorous visual images.

***If your targets are part of the General Public...***

Suppose you decide to get more girls enrolled in school – then your target is the Public, especially the decision-makers within families.

Your approach would be different but you still need to understand the issue, find out if there is any national organisation that shares your interest or build your own group and understand your target group. In this kind of work it is important to identify the outcomes that you want and find ways assessing the impact of what you have been doing.

***Other lobbying tactics***

- **Letter campaigns:** Amnesty International has had success with campaigns to support prisoners and improve their treatment.
- **Using the Internet:** The internet is a weapon that is still relatively underused. Any NGO can consider the following...
- **Citizen reporting:** this is what happens when a member of the public is witness to a HR violation and report immediately to the media through a telephone call, email or photos taken with a mobile phone.

**EXAMPLE:** When Israel invaded Gaza in early 2009 the Israeli government was making claims that were being discredited in the same news bulletin, as citizens caught in the fighting telephoned in and sent photos and film.



Your NGO could find out whom to contact if they witness HR abuses. And if one of the bigger UN organisations or INGOs is collecting information on a particular issue, your NGO could help.

- **On-line communities:** these can link people in your country who are working in the same field. Or, there may be issues around HR abuses where a government is vulnerable to a specific pressure. For example, some countries are concerned about the effect of negative publicity on their tourist trade. There may be people outside your country that could be part of a community putting pressure on travel agencies or participating in fundraising or e-mail campaigns – if you can identify the Who, Why, Where, What and When.
- **Using the legal system:** This involves what is called Strategic Litigation, sometimes also called impact litigation, involves selecting and bringing a case to the courtroom with the goal of creating broader changes in society. Such actions can bring individual satisfaction but also creates publicity.
- **Civilian-based non-violent action:** The Turkish example above is an example of this.

## 5.4 Using the Rescue Triangle

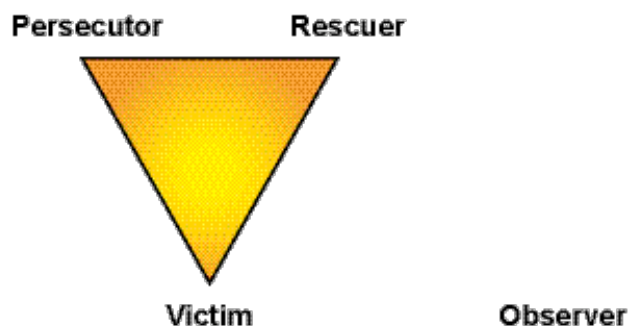
The Rescue Triangle is a tool for understanding motivation. People in the business of helping others or resolving conflict use the Rescue Triangle to figure out why people are acting as they are. There are four roles involved: **Victim**, **Persecutor**, **Rescuer** and **Observer**.

It is based on the idea that everyone – you, me, them – plays roles, just as we do in role-plays. But we do this most of the time, and unconsciously. We all have particular roles that we find comfortable, and, since we – the writers and you, the reader – are involved in NGOs, we all probably like the role of Rescuer.

Other people like being the victim too well. If we help them with one problem they will find another. To be a victim, most people need a bad guy who makes them that way – the persecutor. A classic example is the weak-seeming woman who always marries a man who treats her badly... and who then finds another man who will rescue her. After a while, he, too, starts to treat her badly, so she looks for another man who... etc.

So we do not stay in one role, we move around the Rescue Triangle. And it is not only individuals who do so; it is ethnic groups and countries that play out these roles of Persecutor, Victim or Rescuer. Can you think of examples from Africa and Asia in the last ten years? Times when there were two countries who were fighting each other, both saying they were the victim, both saying that the other is the persecutor and calling on the UN to come to the rescue?

There is one further position that individuals or countries can take, and that is the position of Onlooker, who sees what is going on but does nothing. Often, this is the role taken by the International Community, even by the United Nations – for example when Saddam started gassing the Kurds and during the Rwandan Genocide.



Sometimes, the natural-born rescuers expect too much and get disappointed when the world does not follow their advice. They feel like victims. One way to avoid this, is to stop wanting to control everything. Instead, they could start building partnerships with beneficiaries so they are more responsible than the worker for sorting out their own problems. The worker makes it clear that the problems are theirs, not the worker's, and that nobody can just lift problems off the sufferers' backs. If the groups still come back, time after time, with more and more problems, and workers think they are happy in the victim role, they should talk about this with colleagues. The worker may have to tell the people being helped that it seems that they are not mentally ready to find a true solution; perhaps it would help to set a time limit on any involvement.

**EXAMPLE: NGOs & Reconstruction**

The Iraq Pulse Relief & Development Foundation was set up after the increased killings & Displacement of 2006. The members of the NGO are struggling with a lack of funding. They also face problems with the people they try to help.

Typical is Miriam al Tabir, aged 38. "A suicide bomb made her a widow. She lives mainly on the money earned by her two older boys who do casual work. When we became involved she was very happy with the financial support we could give her. We tried to get her to enrol in our computer-training course. It is designed for people like her and she is certainly smart enough to follow it. But she has got comfortable with her life and with the role of victim, with prayer and gossip, even though the family have very little. Now we are talking to her about her responsibility to get her three smaller children into school – which means finding a job. And perhaps she will start making changes".

"For other NGOs working in a similar position, we would make the following points: we have found that it is very important to get training or upgrading before we start any project; that good project preparation is very time consuming; that although we have NGO members who have "proper" jobs, and who fund the NGO out of a portion of their salaries, this does not leave them with much time for NGO work. Finally it is very important that the beneficiaries are clear about what the NGO can do and cannot do".

## 6. Working in Co-operation

This section covers activities in several North African countries, mainly in the field of women's issues. Administrators within Governments and their contacts within NGOs find common ground. Other NGOs find ways of working with Big Business. This path of cooperation towards better Human Rights is not easy and may take a long time. But the projects that come as a result may have stronger foundations. Laws get modified. There can be remarkable effects.

### 6.1 Women's NGOs in North Africa

### 6.2 How can NGOs become more effective actors in the public scene?

#### 6.1 Women's NGOs in North Africa

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The desire for political freedom and representation leads to citizens taking action to influence choices – in public politics, or in the administration of public affairs, or in the choice of political leaders. They take formal action like voting or informal action such as forming civil society organizations, making protests or holding rallies. These actions can be collective or individual. But the lengths to which they can go depend on the forces of the State and where the boundary line has been drawn at a particular date.

Arab regimes are increasingly under pressure to grant more political and civil rights to their citizens, pressure both from Western governments and international organizations. It comes through aid conditionality and democracy promotion programmes, and at the same time from society.

Society is changing as education increases and economic and socio-cultural factors such as the spread of globalization and the web also change. They all reinforce peoples' awareness and interest in public affairs. Citizens are becoming more conscious of their rights, even if some of them do not trust the system enough to take an active part in political life.

Previously there was the view that sees society and the state in conflict. Now it seems more productive to see the state as part of society. The people involved can develop different ways of acting and forming alliances. They can cooperate and compete to produce purposeful change. In this framework NGOs played their role with concrete actions.

#### **EXAMPLE: A Movement that is making a difference (Mouvement pour le Tiers)**

The Moroccan Ministry of Social Development, Family and Solidarity together with some more active feminist NGOs and some international agencies, is promoting and coordinating an informal, but committed, "Mouvement pour le Tiers des sièges élus pour les femmes... en vue de la parité" (Movement for one third of elected seats to women...towards parity). The "Mouvement..." is for the first time in Morocco a joint movement of governmental institutions, civil society agencies, politicians and political activists, researchers and academic representatives.

The feminist movement in Morocco has always been active and dynamic. Many women's organizations (not always or only headed by women) are lobbying for women's rights. One of their major positive contributions consists in introducing issues of private daily life into public debate and consequently into politics. Through awareness campaigns, activism and lobbying they pushed important people in the social, religious and political like to define

themselves not simply according to their political memberships but instead how they think and act regarding gender equality and the place of women in society.

Some years ago they highlighted the contradiction between laws and constitutions issued by the State and the Family code inspired from the Shari'a. Thanks to this, Moroccan women experienced progress including the modification of the Family Code in 2004.

In November 2008 the "Mouvement" obtained a quota for places to be filled by women of 12% in the 2009 local elections. Now discussion is in progress with the Moroccan Ministry of the Interior over a new version of the Communal Chart in order to guarantee due attention to women's issues at local level. The next step will be the discussion of an "Audio-visual Chart" to ensure that the media pays equal attention to female and male candidates for office. This will be discussed together with the Moroccan Ministry of Communication and other key figures in the media.

The fact that different actors from government and civil society are working together for the same objective is undoubtedly a sign of progress and development.

### **EXAMPLE: joint work for common objectives**

The Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (ATFD) has been a member of many regional and international networks, and has always taken an active part in defending women's causes. ATFD has been dealing with specific issues, such as violence against women. Previously, the government barely listened to it. And the issue itself is a tricky one. ATFD ran awareness campaigns, published investigations and research on the topic, emphasising the scale of the problem and the numbers of families affected. It was supported by other NGOs working on the same issue elsewhere in the Mediterranean. But then a new strategy evolved, a model of working jointly. ATFD joined a wider group promoted by the local Ministry of Women's Affairs, to work out a national strategy to eliminate violence against women. This bought recognition of its strong knowledge base and the important role it could play working with others for a common objective.

The NGO has also extended its educational role. To educate citizens on specific topics they started the "Université féministe Ilhem Marzouki", a cycle of public meetings and debates on specific issues, with experts, researchers, activists and citizens all participating.

## **6.2 How can NGOs become more effective actors in the public scene?**

### ***By becoming more capable:***

Some NGOs begin with people with little experience or capacity. And over time, they do not get much better. This is a key issue for any NGO: at some point it has to question and analyse its own capacity. Does it know how capable it is as a group, how experienced? Has it chosen activities it can do well and avoided the areas where it needs to learn more? Perhaps it is time for the NGO to make an analysis of its Goals compared to the ability of its Human Resources; to identify any gap between the two; and to make a Training Plan to improve the skills of its people so that they can reach those goals. Weakness in an NGO in terms of experiences and skills may seriously damage the role of all NGOs in the political scene and may lose people's trust.

### ***By speaking with one voice:***

In the dialogue between central governmental institutions and NGOs, there is sometimes a major problem of miscommunication from both sides. NGOs have different levels and degrees of maturity and capability; sometimes, together they do not present themselves as a unified, strong voice standing up for their rights and issues. If they worked together they would increase their ability to lobby.

***By choosing the right arena:***

Political dialogue and action is one thing at the centre – in the capital city and parliament - and another at the periphery. In local areas, positive meetings between State and Civil Society are more likely and more visible. At local level: NGOs can be active in communities and serve as an alternative when the State is absent or weak; NGOs may know more about local problems and may be more effective in solving them; Local politics may be less complex than national politics so can be a good area for NGOs to learn their job; When NGOs become involved with local development activities and are successful, this reinforces their self-esteem and their self-confidence about their role in solving local problems; Local authorities are usually well known by everybody in the community; there is less distance between NGOs and local governance structures.

***By supporting and working with the independent media:***

Media actors can play a crucial role in the political dialogue between governmental bodies and civil society, facilitating and promoting debates and exchange of information and lobbying for active citizenship.



*The NGO team plans activities*



## 7. Helping the Damaged

In countries that have experienced decades of war, armed disputes or harsh government, a large proportion of the population can be affected. They can suffer from the physical damage done by war, leaving them blind or with a missing limb. Or they can have a psychological problem such as depression.

### 7.1 Advocacy for Individuals

### 7.2 Other Approaches & Resources

**EXAMPLE:** in Lebanon it is reported that many people are self-diagnosing serious psychological conditions and getting medication without any proper diagnosis or prescription, directly from pharmacies.

**EXAMPLE:** one visitor to an Advocacy centre was a musician at a time where music in his language had been banned. He had been imprisoned in four countries and can recite the miseries and terrors of each penal system. He had had to dodge and dive, to cross borders illegally, to change his name because it labelled him as the wrong nationality or the wrong sort of Muslim. He has had to deny his country and the colours of his flag; he has presented himself as a schizophrenic because that excused any mistakes he might make.

### 7.1 Advocacy for Individuals

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Advocates are usually volunteers. They will have a manager who would look after anything from five to twenty advocates, guiding and training them. An NGO involved in this field needs to:

- have a library that stays up-to-date with all the available resources in the neighbourhood or region
- bring pressure on the Ministries and International NGOs that might have the resources to develop a particular programme
- know if any programme starts that would benefit clients

The job of an advocate is to take on the problems of individuals, becoming their friend and if necessary, spokesperson. Their first task is to help individuals to know that they have rights, and what these rights are. The advocate then lays out realistically the choices that are available to them.

Then, clients have to be enabled to say what they need and want. This involves saying what they feel – not just to come up with what they think the advocate wants to hear. Clients are encouraged to find what they think is best for themselves rather than what might be best for their families or group. And the advocate has to be very careful that his personal evaluation does not take over the decision-making.

Advocates are different from social workers in that they are clearly on the side of their clients. They start with the task of defending the Human Rights of their clients. Social Workers, on the other hand, look after individuals but also families and may, for example, have to put the needs of children over the needs of the parents if the family is in real trouble. But, it is hoped, those parents would also have an advocate during the process of deciding on the needs of all.

The actions and words of the advocate say to the client “You are valuable; you have Rights like any other citizen and you are worth helping”. It is a message that some clients



have never heard before and the message can validate – make them valuable – to themselves. And if clients are helped to speak up for their rights, it empowers them.

Advocates must be careful not to start playing the role of “mother” or let clients slip into the role of “child”. If the advocate is doing the shopping for the client, then things have gone wrong! Advocates must decide what kinds of tasks they should undertake and when they have to stop the relationship.

One important factor is confidentiality and not only must the advocate maintain this but so must the NGO Office, keeping safe any personal details in the files and maintaining silence outside the office – with not a word of gossip.

In practice, advocates make a lot of phone calls and write a lot of letters and emails, acting on behalf of their clients. They may help them speak in meetings, acting as their representative. Many clients have multiple problems and are vulnerable and marginalised – have become people who can be ignored by officials. These kinds of clients need a special effort to get them a fair share of resources.

**EXAMPLE:** a woman came seeking help. Her husband was taken by the police six years previously but she did not know what had become of him until recently. Now the police say that he died in jail years ago. But when she went to register as a war widow, officials said she should have registered when her husband died. And now, they say, she has to wait five years before she can be officially a widow and receive a pension. But she has three children to feed!

## 7.2 Other Approaches & Resources

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As NGOs that want to help some or all of these people, you could consider:

- providing professional help to damaged individuals,
- training your workers to help individuals in basic ways,
- or helping individuals help each other, in pairs or in a group.
- With these last two possibilities, support from a professional who drops in from time to time would help, if available.

**Psychiatrists & Psychologists:** These are your resource people – if you can find them. Try to get advice at least once from one or other and involve them if you can. If you have only the limited time of somebody trained, then consider what other resource-poor services do and extend their cover by providing them with mobile telephones and emails. The phones can help with emergency call-ins, and consultations; both phones and emails can be built into groups and buddy partnerships for mutual support.

**Medication:** Self-medication with prescription drugs is rarely a good idea. However with depression, there is one natural plant that has been found to be as effective as standard anti-depressants but with fewer side effects; this is St. John’s Wort, in Latin *hypericum perforatum*.

**Emails & Mobile Phones:** If there are Internet Cafes in your country, consider on-line support groups. People can type in stories and comments and respond to those of others, writing at the same time or when convenient. These groups are particularly appropriate for people who do not want to be identified. At the moment mobile phones do not link a whole group at one time but they soon will; meanwhile you could arrange pairs of people to

support each other by phone – the ‘Buddy system’ – when they are too far apart to meet physically in pairs or groups.

**Forming & Running Groups:** Different kinds of Groups perform different functions. A general support group can be more casual and friendly; a Facilitated group is designed to change damaging behaviour and usually has a Facilitator to guide discussion.

[See links in Section 8]

**Resources if Working with Children:** Remember the expression “Orphans & Vulnerable Children (OVCs)”.

## 8. Further information

Below are recommended websites, on-line courses, reference materials and further reading relating to the content in this manual.

### 2. Understanding the Problem

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- a) There are links to English & **Arabic** websites at [www.derechos.org/human-rights/mena](http://www.derechos.org/human-rights/mena)
- b) Amnesty: "Challenging Repression: Human Rights Defenders in the Middle East & North Africa": [www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE01/001/2009/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE01/001/2009/en)
- c) Human Rights Watch: [www.hrw.org/en/middle-east/n-africa](http://www.hrw.org/en/middle-east/n-africa)
- d) UN Declaration of HR including **Arabic** translation: [www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/SearchByLang.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/SearchByLang.aspx)
- e) Infant and Under-Five Mortality: [www.unicef.org/specialsession/about/sqreport-pdf/01\\_InfantAndUnder-FiveMortality\\_D7341Insert\\_English.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/about/sqreport-pdf/01_InfantAndUnder-FiveMortality_D7341Insert_English.pdf)
- f) From training materials: [www.ihrnetwork.org](http://www.ihrnetwork.org)
- g) 'Good Governance, Private Dialogue and Sound Democratic Structures in Countries in Development': <http://www.research4development.info/SearchResearchDatabase.asp?ProjectID=60104>
- h) <http://genderindex.org>
- i) Quoted in "Incorporating Gender within your NGO", from [www.networklearning.org](http://www.networklearning.org)
- j) "Domestic Violence against Women & Girls" by Innocenti for UNICEF (PDF): [www.unicef.ca/portal/Secure/Community/502/WCM/WHATWEDO/ChildProtection/pdf/bodyshop/digest6e.pdf](http://www.unicef.ca/portal/Secure/Community/502/WCM/WHATWEDO/ChildProtection/pdf/bodyshop/digest6e.pdf)
- k) Yemen Times on FGM, 12.6.06: [www.yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=954&p=health&a=1](http://www.yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=954&p=health&a=1)
- l) Tactical Mapping, New Tactics in HR: [www.newtactics.org/en/tactical-mapping](http://www.newtactics.org/en/tactical-mapping)
- m) Underage Marriage: [www.ippf.org/en/Resources/Guides-toolkits/Ending+Child+Marriage.htm](http://www.ippf.org/en/Resources/Guides-toolkits/Ending+Child+Marriage.htm)
- n) [www.sistersinislam.org.my](http://www.sistersinislam.org.my)

### 3. The Skills a Human Rights NGO needs

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References a) to f) are available from the Networklearning Library at [www.networklearning.org](http://www.networklearning.org).

- a) "How to Build a Good Small NGO" (**Arabic** version available)
- b) "How to Run a Workshop"
- c) "Information Collection throughout the project Cycle"
- d) "A guide to Fundraising" (**Arabic** version available)
- e) "Teaching for Better Learning"
- f) "Interviewing and Counselling at the Grassroots"
- g) Management Skills: [www.networklearning.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=53&catid=21&Itemid=145](http://www.networklearning.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53&catid=21&Itemid=145)
- h) "Guide for Designing Results-Oriented Projects and Writing Successful Proposals": [www.ippfwhr.org/en/node/282#attachments](http://www.ippfwhr.org/en/node/282#attachments)
- i) Links to "A Guide to Proposal Writing & Fundraising" & "Basic Tips for Fundraising for Small NGOs" at: [www.ngomanager.org/dcd/4\\_Managing\\_Finances/Fundraising](http://www.ngomanager.org/dcd/4_Managing_Finances/Fundraising)
- j) The Communications Initiative website has information on funders and much more: [www.comminit.com/en/funding.html](http://www.comminit.com/en/funding.html)
- k) On Good Governance, see for example: [www.id21.org/id21ext/s9asb1g1.html](http://www.id21.org/id21ext/s9asb1g1.html)
- l) "What is Effective Training?" IHRN preparatory reading for HR NGOs: [www.ihrnetwork.org/files/7.%20What%20is%20Effective%20Training.PDF](http://www.ihrnetwork.org/files/7.%20What%20is%20Effective%20Training.PDF)

- m) The Human Rights Education Program for Women in Turkey:  
[www.newtactics.org/TheHumanRightsEducationProgramforWomen](http://www.newtactics.org/TheHumanRightsEducationProgramforWomen)
- n) Civil Society Engagement eNewsletter, July 2005:  
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20595838~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html>

## **4. Building Cultures that favour Human Rights**

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- a) To subscribe to “DB Click: Democracy and Governance” and “The Drum Beat” newsletter, email [drumbeat@comminit.com](mailto:drumbeat@comminit.com) requesting “subscribe D&G.”
- b) From the TVTPW Termination Report 2007, source: the “Toolkit for the Establishment and effective Running of a MOSA Empowerment Centre” by Theresa Oakley-Smith.
- c) See the manual “Incorporating Gender into your NGO”, from [www.networklearning.org](http://www.networklearning.org)
- d) Irin news reports: [www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)
- e) People Building Peace – click on “Toolkit” (available in **Arabic**): [www.peoplebuildingpeace.org](http://www.peoplebuildingpeace.org)
- f) Transparency International’s MENA pages:  
[www.transparency.org/regional\\_pages/africa\\_middle\\_east/middle\\_east\\_and\\_north\\_africa\\_mena](http://www.transparency.org/regional_pages/africa_middle_east/middle_east_and_north_africa_mena)
- g) Civil Society Anti-Corruption Initiatives in MENA Countries:  
[www.u4.no/pdf/?file=/helpdesk/helpdesk/queries/query157.pdf](http://www.u4.no/pdf/?file=/helpdesk/helpdesk/queries/query157.pdf)
- h) “Educating the Next Generation”: [www.newtactics.org/en/EducatingtheNextGeneration](http://www.newtactics.org/en/EducatingtheNextGeneration)
- i) “Confronting Corruption – The Elements of a National Integrity System”.  
Overview: [www.transparency.org/publications/sourcebook/content\\_overview](http://www.transparency.org/publications/sourcebook/content_overview)
- j) Linking the Corruption, Water and Environmental Agendas to Combat Climate Change:  
[www.transparency.org/content/download/33359/511573](http://www.transparency.org/content/download/33359/511573)
- k) Daily Star (Lebanon), 6 8.99

## **5. Interventions**

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- a) [www.iranhumanrights.org](http://www.iranhumanrights.org) (in English & **Arabic**)
- b) [www.bahrainrights.org](http://www.bahrainrights.org) (in English & **Arabic**)
- c) Human Rights Defenders: This chapter is abridged from “Maximising the Legitimacy of Human Rights Defenders” by Karen Kenny, LLB DES: [www.IHRNetworking.org](http://www.IHRNetworking.org)
- d) Dubai example from *The Independent*: “The Dark side of Dubai” by Johann Hari, 7.4.09
- e) Codes of Conduct at [www.escwa.org.lb/ecw/editors/pubs/COMPNGO.pdf](http://www.escwa.org.lb/ecw/editors/pubs/COMPNGO.pdf). Other examples include “Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief” available at [www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/](http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/) and “Code of Good Practice for NGOs Responding to HIV/AIDS” at [www.ifrc.org/what/health/hivaids/code](http://www.ifrc.org/what/health/hivaids/code)
- f) NGO Consultative status with UN: <http://esa.un.org/coordination/ngo/new/index.asp?page=documents> (in English & **Arabic**)
- g) “Reporting Skills & Professional Writing Handbook”: [www.reportingskills.org](http://www.reportingskills.org)
- h) “Advocacy and Interventions: Readings in Communication and Development” (444 pages): [www.comminit.com/en/node/265784](http://www.comminit.com/en/node/265784)
- i) “Using Mobile Phones in Advocacy Campaigns”: [http://mobileactive.org/files/MobileActiveGuide2\\_0.pdf](http://mobileactive.org/files/MobileActiveGuide2_0.pdf)
- j) Activism Made Easy: A Study of Amnesty International’s Online Campaign to Stop Torture: [www.eumap.org/journal/features/2004/infuhr/infuhr2/activismeasy](http://www.eumap.org/journal/features/2004/infuhr/infuhr2/activismeasy)
- k) Strategic Litigation for Children: [www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=17127&flag=report](http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=17127&flag=report)

- l) The Rescue Triangle: [www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/committees/study/2006/SFAM/files/17prete.pdf](http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/committees/study/2006/SFAM/files/17prete.pdf)

## **7. Helping the Damaged**

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- a) Training your staff as counsellors – "Interviewing & Counselling at the Grassroots":  
[www.networklearning.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=cat\\_view&gid=45&Itemid=52](http://www.networklearning.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=45&Itemid=52)  
(manual available in English, French & Somali)
- b) Running groups: [www.paho.org/English/ped/stressmgn5.pdf](http://www.paho.org/English/ped/stressmgn5.pdf)
- c) Groups for Blind people can get help on-line from the Hadley School: [www.hadley-school.org/2\\_h\\_onlinecourses.asp](http://www.hadley-school.org/2_h_onlinecourses.asp)
- d) Behaviour Change – Facilitating Groups, Domestic Violence and other resources:  
[www.networklearning.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=82&catid=64&Itemid=125](http://www.networklearning.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82&catid=64&Itemid=125)
- e) "Orphans & Other Vulnerable Children – a Toolkit". Register to get CD from AIDS Alliance:  
[www.aidsalliance.org/sw505.asp](http://www.aidsalliance.org/sw505.asp)
- f) Community care: "The Promise of a Future: Strengthening Family and Community Care for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Sub-Saharan Africa":  
[www.ovcsupport.net/graphics/OVC/documents/0000838e00.pdf](http://www.ovcsupport.net/graphics/OVC/documents/0000838e00.pdf)
- g) "Emergency Care & Family Tracing for Separated Children 0-5 years" by UNICEF:  
[www.aidsalliance.org/graphics/OVC/documents/cp/0000858e00.pdf](http://www.aidsalliance.org/graphics/OVC/documents/cp/0000858e00.pdf)
- h) Child Protection: [www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)

## **Additional Resources in Human Rights**

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- a) [www.Newtactics.org](http://www.Newtactics.org) has case studies, tools and ideas including "New Tactics in Human Rights – A Resource for Practitioners" in **Arabic**.
- b) For training Courses: periodically check
  - [www.ihrnetwork.org](http://www.ihrnetwork.org),
  - [www.fahamu.org](http://www.fahamu.org),
  - [www.intrac.org](http://www.intrac.org),and for financial management:
  - [www.mango.org](http://www.mango.org) (also has a "Financial Health Check" in **Arabic**).
- c) A study of Amnesty's online campaign against torture:  
[www.eumap.org/journal/features/2004/infohr/infohr2/activismeasy](http://www.eumap.org/journal/features/2004/infohr/infohr2/activismeasy)
- d) Child Rights – A Guide to Strategic Litigation:  
[www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=17127&flag=report](http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=17127&flag=report)
- e) IHRN has a comprehensive reading list available from the training team, also links to a number of **Arabic** resources: [www.ihrnetwork.org/](http://www.ihrnetwork.org/)
- f) Useful background reading material:  
[www.eisil.org/index.php?sid=131534546&t=sub\\_pages&cat=185](http://www.eisil.org/index.php?sid=131534546&t=sub_pages&cat=185)